

## INTERNATIONAL FARMERS' DIALOGUE - INDIA FEBRUARY 2016

by Jacinta Wanja (Kenya)

The conference was a very good experience from day one when I arrived and I met my fellow African, Ms. Tema from South Africa. We become good friends and later I met friends from D.R. Congo.



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On 5th of February we attended the 30th formal assembly programme of Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth Agricultural University in Akola. Although I had just arrived it was worth seeing how happy and energetic the students were as they received their awards. -Later we had the introduction of the conference delegates. It was wonderful meeting new friends from many countries all with one goal of feeding the world.



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The conference was like going back to class, I learnt more on soil health, organic farming, agricultural technologies and seed treatments which many farmers ignore. I learnt that when we doubt technologies it is like gambling with our life and all farmers should consider and embrace the new technology to help improve our farming and be able to feed the world as this is our calling.

As farmers we have the ability to increase our harvest through the use of the best seeds, fertilizer and water. We need to become more successful at balancing the use of appropriate inputs, which then improve our outputs. It was very interesting to visit the Jain Irrigation and Food Processing Plant on the February 7th, where we learnt about using simple irrigation systems and safe water to obtain more production from our farms. We visited the Gandhi Research Foundation, an impressive complex of buildings constructed to preserve the values cherished and practiced by Mahatma Gandhi. it was very inspiring as we learnt more about Gandhiji's life and how he fought for India to be Independent.



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On 8th we visited rain water harvesting system which made me realize the we are able to transform even the driest regions to be agricultural areas if the right technology is embraced. We learnt more on genetically modified organisms (GMO) how it is done and how the seeds are designed and if used properly can help to eradicate hunger in the world. Climate change is not inevitable and we need to all learn on how to deal with it. To me the conference was more like a school where I learnt of new skills and technology in agriculture and as a result felt more motivated. I had much information to bring back home and in East Africa as a whole.

To sum up, the Farmers Dialogues I have attended have broadened my horizons, introduced me to new farming methods through the speeches and farming visits and talking with the people I have met from many different countries. This is a very cost effective way of spreading new ideas that will increase food production.

